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103rd plenary meeting
Friday, 11 September 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (A/69/1007)

Draft resolution

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 117 and agenda item 118 at its 55th plenary meeting, on 18 November 2014.

The draft resolution before us today, as contained in paragraph 68 of document A/69/1007, is the outcome of a lengthy and intensive negotiation process. I commend all Member States for their commitment to the negotiation process and for the spirit of compromise and flexibility exhibited by delegations throughout the negotiations. I pay tribute to the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, and Ambassador Wilfried Emvula, Permanent Representative of Namibia, for their steadfast leadership on this critical issue.

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly has been one of the key priorities for the sixty-ninth session. This work is an important aspect of the broader efforts to strengthen and reform the United Nations, and the draft resolution contains significant steps in that direction. The draft underscores the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It strengthens the role and the authority of the Assembly, encourages improvement in its working methods and calls for strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

I commend the consensual agreement reached on the need to ensure transparency in the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General. The draft resolution stresses the need to observe the principles of inclusiveness and openness in the process of selecting the next Secretary-General, and invites Member States to consider presenting candidates based on the need for gender and geographical balance.

The draft resolution calls for my successor and the President of the Security Council to issue a joint letter to Member States soliciting candidates for the position of Secretary-General and to further circulate the names of the candidates submitted for consideration. The General Assembly will then conduct informal meetings with candidates, further contributing to transparency in the selection process. It recognizes that the implementation of Assembly resolutions is critical to the body's effectiveness and efficiency. I encourage all Member States to take an active role in following up on implementation to maximize the Organization's capacity to address issues under its three pillars, namely, peace and security, development, and human rights.

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As we mark 70 years of the existence of the United Nations, we look back at the important milestones achieved during this session. This draft resolution is an important contribution to strengthening our Organization. I thank all members for their valuable contributions.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution entitled "Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly", which is contained in paragraph 68 of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 69/321).

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Van Den Akker (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

We welcome the adoption today of resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's plenary m eting and for your engagement in the Assembly's revitalization process. We would also like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak and Mr. Wilfried Emvula, and their teams, who ably led the negotiation process. We would also like to thank Mr. Ion Botnaru and Mr. Georg Zeiner, of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, and other colleagues in the Secretariat for their useful involvement. And we would like to highlight the constructive atmosphere that prevailed throughout the negotiations and to thank all the negotiating partners for their engagement in revitalizing the Assembly.

The resolution we have just adopted includes significant innovations and would not have been possible without the flexibility shown by all the States Members of the United Nations engaged in the negotiations. It can be seen as a milestone in the enhancement of the transparency and inclusivity of the selection process for the next Secretary-General. In that regard, the introduction of informal dialogues and meetings with the candidates for the position of Secretary-General is particularly noteworthy. Significant progress has also been made in other areas, such as the working methods of the General Assembly and its Main Committees.

On 22 June, the Council of the European Union adopted its priorities for the seventieth session of the General Assembly. They recognize that the revitalization of the Assembly is a key component in the strengthening of the United Nations as a whole, and it is with that in mind that I wish to signal our readiness to remain constructively engaged in that process.

Ms. Lind (Estonia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group. The cross-regional ACT group consists of 27 small and mid-size countries working together to improve the working methods of the Security Council. We welcome the adoption today by consensus of resolution 69/321, and would like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, the Ambassadors of Croatia and Namibia, for their excellent work and dedication, and all our colleagues for the constructive spirit they displayed during the negotiations.

The ACT group would like to offer a few comments on the cluster that dealt with the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General, as addressed in the resolution.

We are pleased that the Ad Hoc Working Group achieved a consensus agreement on ensuring that the selection and appointment will be carried out in a clear and structured manner, by first starting the process with a joint letter from the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council containing a description of the entire process, and as a next step, by circulating to all Member States, on an ongoing basis, the names of the candidates for the position of Secretary-General. In our view, the decision to conduct informal dialogues and meetings with candidates contributes greatly to the improvement of the whole selection process.

In view of the importance of ensuring that the best possible candidate is appointed to fill the post of Secretary-General, the ACT group applauds the inclusion of clear and precise qualifications and criteria in paragraph 39 of the resolution. Together with the aforementioned procedural developments, that is clearly a strong sign of the increased transparency of the selection and appointment process for the next Secretary-General. The ACT group welcomes and

strongly supports the resolution's provision inviting Member States to consider submitting the candidatures of women for the position of Secretary-General. We are also glad to see that the resolution reaffirms the role of the President of the General Assembly in actively supporting the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General and in monitoring and reviewing the Assembly's implementation of adopted resolutions. The ACT group also echoes paragraph 44 of the resolution in affirming its readiness to continue discussing all the issues relating to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General in all their aspects within the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during its seventieth session. More specifically, we very much hope for a thorough discussion at the next session of the duration of the Secretary-General's term of office and the option of a single, non-renewable term of seven years, while also taking into account the need to implement provisions from previous resolutions.

In conclusion, the ACT group would like to emphasize the importance of implementing the provisions of the resolution we have adopted today, and in that regard we hope for fruitful and close cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the adoption today by consensus of this landmark resolution 69/321. I would like to thank my Namibian and Croatian colleagues for all their efforts as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly in shepherding through this important agreement.

I align myself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union on behalf of its member States.

On my first day as British Ambassador to the United Nations, I set out three principles that I thought should guide the selection of the next Secretary-General: a clear timeline, a transparent selection process and an opportunity open to all, no matter what their gender. It is therefore with great personal and professional satisfaction that I see we have made important steps today towards realizing those principles, particularly the first and second. Our welcome consensus moves us closer to realizing a more predictable and transparent process, and so we have started the race to find a person fit for one of the most important jobs in the world — a person who will guide us through the most challenging threats to our peace and security; a person who will oversee the most ambitious development agenda in our history; a person who truly is one for 7 billion.

We have taken three important steps towards realizing that goal. First, we have agreed to a joint letter from the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council soliciting candidates for the post of Secretary-General. In doing so, for the first time in United Nations history we have agreed to establish a clear starting point and description for the selection and appointment process for this vital role. Secondly, we have agreed to maintain a public, consolidated list of candidates, held jointly by the Presidents of the Assembly and the Security Council. The days of smoke-filled rooms and of rumours and speculation on the runners and riders for the job are over. Through our consensus today we have brought overdue transparency to an archaic and opaque practice. And finally, we have pledged to hold candidates up to genuine scrutiny through informal dialogues with them that are open to all Members. We all now have the chance to test the calibre of those who put themselves forward, to understand their motivation and ambition and to challenge, question and cajole them in their bid for this highest of offices.

It is disappointing, however, that there was strong resistance to the participation of civil society in these meetings. As I said in my statement to the Ad Hoc Working Group in April, the United Kingdom wants to see a process that is open to all Member States, but also to observers and to civil society. That is why we are open to organizing an Arria Formula meeting with candidates that really is open to all.

There is always more to be done, and we have only just begun. A predictable and transparent process will fail without the broadest possible range of credible candidates. That must mean expressions of interest from the broadest possible range of men and women. I have said it before, and I will proudly say it again, that the United Kingdom believes that, other things being equal, it is high time for a woman to lead the United Nations. It is therefore incumbent upon us all to ensure that we have the broadest range of women competing for the role. We will never find the best candidate if we exclude half of the world's population. Let us all encourage the world's leading women to answer the call and apply for the role.

Let me conclude by again thanking you, Mr. President, for all of your efforts to ensure consensus on today's resolution, and in a fitting way to herald in the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. I also want to thank the many groups outside the Hall — the advocates, the civil society groups and the many others — who pushed us along this path. In doing so we have together brought greater transparency to such an important task ahead of us.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): As speakers before me have done, I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your great efforts to ensure that we could today adopt resolution 69/321 by consensus. I also thank our colleagues the Ambassador of Croatia and the Ambassador of Namibia for their dedicated work to make this a success.

No doubt, this has been a historic General Assembly session. Member States worked throughout many long months of negotiations so that we could have a United Nations able to respond to the major challenges of the current world — and we did so through consensus. That is something interesting and positive about this year. After hard, gruelling battles we succeeded in agreeing the Sustainable Development Goals, which our Heads of State will adopt as Agenda 2030. And there are also promising signs about a climate agreement in Paris at the end of the year. Strengthening the United Nations is crucial to ensuring that the ambitious agenda we have set for ourselves goes beyond aspirations to become a reality over the next 15 years. Effective, inclusive and transparent work by the General Assembly is essential to that end, as you more than anyone else know, Mr. President, as you wrap up your year-long presidency.

In April, when Colombia proposed some changes to the draft resolution pertaining to the established process for the nomination and appointment of the Secretary-General, we set out five key points. The first was to re-establish the active role assigned to the General Assembly via its President by the Charter of the United Nations. The second was to democratize the selection process and to begin the process as early as possible and in an open and transparent manner. The third was to ensure that the permanent members of the Security Council, in a spirit of openness and transparency, present their candidates so that the Assembly could play its role in the appointment. The fourth was that the Assembly should publicly hear from the candidates so that all Member States could make sufficiently informed decisions — and that, as has been said here, constitutes historic progress. And the fifth, which I cannot fail to mention, is the promise held out by resolution 69/321 so that, for the first time ever, the United Nations can elect a woman to the post of Secretary-General.

I think that with that transcendent step with regard to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General all Members are at last basing the eligibility of women on their professional and personal capacities. The time has come to consider selecting a woman for the post of Secretary-General. In that regard, the consensus adoption of today's resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is clearly a step in the right direction. I again thank the co-facilitators and you yourself, Mr. President.

Mr. Mendoza-García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Estonia on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. Allow me to make some remarks in my national capacity.

First, we appreciate the leadership and commitment of the Ambassadors of Croatia and Namibia, as well as the constructive work of all delegations. We are especially grateful to members of civil society, which played a crucial role in this process. Costa Rica is greatly satisfied with the adoption by consensus, under agenda item 118, of resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

From the beginning of the negotiations, Costa Rica participated actively in the process because it believes that to strengthen the leadership of the United Nations as the cornerstone of global governance requires first choosing the best candidate to occupy the post of Secretary-General from 1 January 2016. Since 1946, the process of the selection of who occupies the most important place in the international community has been characterized as being opaque and undemocratic. Costa Rica is determined to change that.

As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, my country, along with Estonia, leads the efforts to establish a transparent, democratic and inclusive process that is consistent — as it currently is not — with similar processes at the highest level. We aim to further strengthen the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as a decision on the appointment of the Secretary-General

is up to not only the five permanent members of the Council, but the entire membership.

Costa Rica is proud to have succeeded in including in the resolution an invitation to Member States to put forward women candidates for the post of Secretary-General. That political message is very clear in the resolution. Let us hope that it indeed is, for the time has come for a woman to be the next Secretary-General.

We are also encouraged that from this moment on, and for the first time in history, we will have not only an opportunity to learn the names of candidates and their records, but the ability to interact with the candidates themselves.

I understand that changes in the United Nations do not occur as fast as we would like. Today we are taking very important steps, but there are still crucial other steps to be taken. Despite the achievements of this year, Costa Rica will continue to work with the same enthusiasm and determination to generate the necessary political momentum for the Security Council to present the General Assembly with not one but two or more candidates, so that there can be an election and not a mere appointment process.

With a similar hope that we will generate more substantial changes in the short term, we will continue advocating to make the term of office for a single period of seven years in order to ensure the independence of the post. Re-election is not the best formula to ensure the determination and leadership we need right now for humankind. In these times of crisis, when so many lives hang in the balance, when instead of closing our eyes and our borders we should be opening them and acting with courage, our actions and decisions make a difference.

Mr. Luque Márquez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador would first like to express its heartfelt thanks for the efforts of the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Namibia, Ambassador Vladimir Drobjnak and Ambassador Wilfried Emvula, and their teams for deftly and with great patience guiding us to the outcome of our work, that is, the consensus adoption of resolution 69/321. We should also thank the staff of the Secretariat who supported this year's meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that we have made significant progress. The resolution recognizes the work of Permanent Missions in the context of the effectiveness of the General Assembly, and invites the President to conduct an informal meeting of the Assembly to consider ways and means to further enhance coordination between Permanent Missions and the Secretariat. The resolution also opens the way forward so that the Secretariat can make Member States aware of limitations that impede the proper implementation of resolutions regarding the Secretariat. The resolution urges the President and the Chairs of the Main Committees to continue to increase their consultations with Member States in order to improve the way in which the work of the Main Committees is conducted. And the resolution reiterates the importance of the Assembly meeting the opening date of its general debate in accordance with the procedures it laid down for itself.

The resolution also requests the Secretary-General to provide information as to gender balance and the regional origin of executive heads and the Senior Management Group of the Organization — an issue of particular importance for my delegation.

The resolution also reiterates the need to provide the Office of the President of the General Assembly with the human resources necessary to preserve its institutional memory.

There is no gainsaying that, for various reasons, the election of the Secretary-General was the most interesting theme in the debate this year. In addition to referring to the imperative need to implement rule 141 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, elements have been introduced advocating transparency in the process, such as the coordinated action of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council at the time of asking that nominations for candidates be put forward, and also ensuring that Member States on the list are kept informed of what is happening. As the resolution provides for informal meetings between the General Assembly and the candidates, my delegation would like to highlight the invitation in paragraph 38 that States consider nominating women to the post of Secretary-General. It is certainly high time for that. Indeed, we are lagging behind what has happened in many countries around the world that have had leaders of State or Government. It is time that we had a woman leading the United Nations as Secretary-General.

Those important transparency measures obviously have to be accompanied by others that affirm the

active role, pursuant to Article 98 of the Charter of the United Nations, that the General Assembly must play when it comes to appointing the Secretary-General. For my delegation, the provisions of paragraph 44 are particularly important in that regard, namely, that over the next session we continue our discussions and continue to take decisions on issues such as, for example, the number of recommendations that it would be desirable for the Security Council to put to the Assembly, or the term of the Secretary-General's mandate. We are committed to holding conversations and debating and discussing those issues in order to arrive at decisions that can render more democratic the process of the appointment of the Secretary-General, or, better still, of the next woman Secretary-General.

During the current session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, a goal of the delegation of Ecuador was the reaffirmation of the rights and prerogatives of the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. That makes it the most representative body of the Organization, where all States are represented on an equal footing. Our purpose over the next year will be the same. We still have a long way to go.

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): Brazil welcomes the adoption by consensus of this important resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

This year's resolution introduces important changes to the process of selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, especially with regard to its transparency. The process will now be initiated by a joint letter of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council addressed to all Member States and soliciting candidates for the position of Secretary-General. The names of individuals submitted for consideration will be circulated on an ongoing basis. The General Assembly will conduct informal dialogues or meetings with the candidates for the position. More objective criteria have been set for the qualities expected of a Secretary-General. Member States have also been invited to consider putting forward women as candidates for the position. Those are all significant achievements. We were able to use a narrow window of opportunity to ensure that the next process of selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, expected to happen next year, will be more transparent.

In that regard, we would like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia and Ambassador Wilfried Emvula of Namibia, for their excellent work.

During the negotiation of the document just adopted, Brazil also defended other proposals that, unfortunately, were not included in this consensual resolution. Important questions remain to be addressed. One is how to ensure a more active role for the General Assembly in nominating the Secretary-General, according to article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations, so as not to merely rubber-stamp a Security Council decision. Another is the possibility of the Security Council sending more than one name for consideration by the General Assembly. Moreover, although supported by a substantial number of delegations, language including a suggestion to discuss the duration of the appointment and the renewability of the term of office of the Secretary-General could not be included in this resolution for the sake of consensus.

Those are some of the questions that need to continue to be discussed. The process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is of the utmost importance for the Organization. Brazil reiterates its commitment to improve that process in order to make it more inclusive, pluralistic and in tune with an increasingly multipolar world.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation thanks and commends the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia and Ambassador Wilfried Emvula of Namibia, for their important leadership and efforts in stewarding the group's proceedings.

My delegation has great expectations concerning resolution 69/321, which we have just adopted. It is our sincere hope that all provisions in the resolution will be implemented. In the resolution, we reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as well as its role and authority in matters of concern to the international community. The resolution expresses the resolve that the role of the General Assembly will be strengthened in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads, and that there will be enhanced transparency and accountability in

the relevant processes. We also emphasize the need to continue strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly through appropriate support in staff and resources.

This resolution is indeed very important, not least because numerous new elements pertaining to strengthening the Assembly have been highlighted. Indonesia congratulates all delegations that worked tirelessly to make it substantive and forward-looking. At the same time, we would like to underscore the imperative of political will by our Member States in ensuring that the Assembly is fully supported and enabled to perform its role as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations.

As we commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, we can all be proud of the achievements of the Assembly and its bodies in their various spheres. Yet we also know that much more needs to be done to overcome its shortcomings. Therefore, with the adoption of the resolution today, let us also pledge that we will all bring to bear our respective political capital and fully discharge our responsibilities to ensure that the General Assembly becomes a robust pulpit for the international community in order to make the world more peaceful, safe and prosperous for everyone.

Finally, Indonesia would like to reiterate that it will continue to play its role actively in the Ad Hoc Working Group, as well as in other forums, with the aim of revitalizing the General Assembly.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Namibia, His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak and His Excellency Mr. Wilfried Emvula, respectively, as well as their hard-working colleagues. They were reasoned and firm and actively sought compromise without prejudice to impartiality. They also took a serious analytical approach to the negotiations — all of which allowed us to achieve a result that seemed improbable only a few months ago.

We would also like to note the important contribution by Non-Aligned Movement delegations in achieving a positive result in the negotiations. We thank the Algerian delegation and the coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue for their consistency and the principled stands that they took in developing and promoting the position of the Movement in very difficult negotiations on revitalizing the General Assembly.

We are cautiously optimistic about resolution 69/321. Undoubtedly, the adoption of this resolution by consensus, against the backdrop of great interest in the subject and rather critical discussions, inspires hope. At the same time, we are convinced that ensuring any change in the Organization does not lie in the text of the resolutions — the problem of the non-fulfilment of resolutions is well known to everyone here. The necessary prerequisite for any change is practical cooperation, based not only on a will to convince partners — when we write — but also and, above all, on our ability to listen to others. Time and future events in the Organization will show whether we have really managed to reach an agreement.

Belarus welcomes the inclusion in the text of the resolution of proposals to democratize the process of nominating and appointing the Secretary-General. The need for secret votes when appointing the Secretary-General — in close compliance with the General Assembly's rules — and the establishment of gender and geographical balance when selecting candidates to that duty are also important. We assume that that balance cannot be established at a moment's notice, but has to be done gradually. We also assume that participation in this process by all Member States, with each one acting according to its capabilities, will allow us to strengthen the Organization in general, without going beyond the remit of the Charter of the United Nations. That is also the goal served by steps to optimize the working methods of the General Assembly and its cooperation with other United Nations bodies.

Over the past several months, the process in which we have been participants and witnesses has evidently yielded much more than just this direct result, that is, the document we have adopted today. It has also shown that, after 70 years of the United Nations, Member States have not lost the ability to at least sometimes go beyond the principled setting out of positions. They can simply sit and listen to one another and understand the wishes and expectations of others. That is the wonder of empathy, and our ability to move towards that miracle is what will determine the future of the Organization.

Mr. Normand (France) (*spoke in French*): France associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

We congratulate all Member States on the flexibility and constructive spirit that made possible this important outcome. I especially would like to congratulate the Ambassador of Croatia, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak, and the Ambassador of Namibia, Mr. Wilfried Emvula, co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and co-facilitators of the discussion, as well as their teams, for their commitment, which helped reach consensus on resolution 69/321. This resolution is important — even historic — because for the first time all Member States have agreed to strengthen transparency of the selection process of the Secretary-General. Specifically, the relevant innovations include the following aspects.

The joint letter by the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly will issue a call for nominations. A list of candidates is to be published at regular intervals. Informal meetings are to take place between candidates for the post of Secretary-General and Member States. There is also an acknowledgement of the need to take gender into account in the choice of the top officials of the Organization and of the Secretary-General. And, lastly, States are invited to consider a set of criteria upon a candidate's presentation — including multilingualism. As it is for many other Member States, the latter is an important point for us. Those are major innovations that meet a legitimate aspiration to achieve greater transparency in the appointment of the Secretary General. We welcome that result, which encompasses the changes that we called for.

I would also like to stress an essential element that made possible consensus on the text, that is, that the result respects the broad institutional balance among the United Nations bodies as established in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 97 of the Charter, which stipulates that the "Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council", is not compromised by this outcome in the resolution.

I would also like to underscore how important it is that we have reached consensus on the adoption of this resolution and that we have been able to avoid the risk of a vote, which could have plunged the United Nations into an institutional crisis. This result shows that, by demonstrating a spirit of compromise, we are able to move forward together to achieve progress in our shared Organization by respecting the rules that regulate the relationship among the organs of the United Nations and ensure their functioning.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Assembly of the support and commitment of France to implementing the results of this resolution in the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): I would like to make a brief concluding statement on behalf of the two co-Chairs.

Resolution 69/321, which we have just adopted, is an important, far-reaching document that will be put to practical use very soon. It reflects the common position of all Member States, which strengthens its substance and reach. It meets the respective interests of Member States. But we can certainly go a step further and say with confidence that this resolution is above all in the best interests of the Organization. Allow me to make two brief particular points.

First, this resolution is a result of the long, tireless work of many Member States and their willingness to engage in a thorough, substantive debate on numerous crucial issues on the subject of the revitalization of the General Assembly, in particular those related to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. It was the willingness on all sides to compromise, as well as the common desire not to miss the opportunity on the eve of the process of selecting the new Secretary-General, that made this resolution possible. We worked on this resolution for many months, and the final results clearly show how much we can accomplish if we act and work together. The co-Chairs wholeheartedly thank all delegations for that.

Secondly, throughout our debate and exchange of views, both formal and informal, we touched upon many aspects of the pivotal issue of revitalizing the General Assembly. As the resolution before us demonstrates, some issues were successfully addressed and were the subject of appropriate, effective solutions. On the other hand, some issues were put on hold to be addressed properly during the seventieth session of the General Assembly and beyond. To put it simply, we have accomplished a lot, but our work on the revitalization of the General Assembly is not done yet.

Our debates were rich in substance and creative and included new ideas and proposals, thus contributing to the quality of this resolution. The crux of our debates is reflected in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly

(A/69/1007), which remains an important point of departure for some aspects of our work in the future.

In conclusion, allow me once again, on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Namibia, my friend Ambassador Wilfried Emvula, and myself, to express our gratitude to all colleagues for their substantive and highly professional cooperation. We warmly thank colleagues from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, especially Mr. Georg Zeiner, and we thank in particular the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for entrusting us with co-chairmanship and supporting us firmly throughout the process. We thank all delegations.

The President: I should like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia and Ambassador Emvula of Namibia, co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, who so ably conducted the discussions and complex negotiations of the Working Group. I am sure members of the Assembly will join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 118?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 34

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/973 and A/69/973/Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/69/L.89)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.89.

Mr. Ceriani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the delegation of Uruguay, which holds the presidency of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.89 to the General Assembly.

We welcome the report (A/69/973) of the Secretary-General and its addendum (A/69/973/Add.1) on the activities undertaken by the Zone.

We recall that, through resolution 41/11, of 1986, the South Atlantic Ocean was declared a Zone of peace and cooperation, while the third Ministerial Meeting of the Zone, held in Brasilia in September 1994, adopted the Declaration on the Denuclearization of the South Atlantic. Those documents, in addition to the resolutions adopted in the General Assembly, firmly demonstrate the peaceful will and cooperative spirit of the members of the Zone.

At this session, we are introducing a draft resolution that sets out issues that are important for the Zone, as well as the actions taken since Uruguay assumed the presidency at the seventh Ministerial Meeting, held in Montevideo in January 2013, where the Montevideo Declaration and the Plan of Action were adopted. Those documents are still relevant and are currently being implemented.

Great efforts have been made, and the existing cooperation network among the 24 States parties to the Zone has been strengthened in many different areas. There is more to be done, and we are aware of that. However, that is precisely the purpose of this mechanism: to continue working for the benefit of member States and their peoples and to foster international peace and cooperation.

We hope that the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Zone will be held in Cabo Verde in the near future and that we will pass on to Cabo Verde the privilege of leading the Zone for the next two years.

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): It has been more than 30 years since Brazil took part in the establishment of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic by the General Assembly. Then as now, Brazil, together with South American and African partner countries, sought to bring about the consolidation of the South Atlantic Ocean as a zone of peace, free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Since its inception, the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic has been consolidating those original goals. It has also been faced with the challenges posed by current global issues that are of interest to developing countries, such as sustainable development, South-South cooperation, disarmament issues and the fight against poverty.

Seven ministerial meetings of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic have since 1984 resulted in the establishment of a set of principles for the activities of the regional arrangement. The most recent ministerial meeting of the Zone, held in Montevideo on 15 and 16 January 2013, enabled its member States to renew their commitments and pursue

their efforts towards deepening cooperation in areas such as global governance, development, economic and financial issues, disarmament, peace and security, defence, sustainable development and climate change, oceans and marine resources, and international crime. Moreover, concrete cooperation initiatives were provided for in the Montevideo Plan of Action, adopted at that meeting, in the following areas: mapping and exploration of the seabed, protection and conservation of the marine environment and marine scientific research, air and maritime transportation, maritime safety and security, public security and transnational organized crime, as well as capacity-building.

These ambitious commitments and mandates adopted by our ministers reflect the increasing economic, political and strategic importance of the South Atlantic region for its coastal States in the context of current global, political and economic realities. We hope that our joint endeavour will continue to increase mutual exchanges between the African and South American peoples, who are bound by strong historical ties and cultural heritage.

Allow me to underscore the commitment of the States members of the Zone to avoid the militarization of the South Atlantic by reinforcing further cooperation aimed at fostering peace and development. These are the values that we seek to reaffirm through the draft resolution that is before the General Assembly today.

In concluding, I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of Cabo Verde, which has so kindly offered to host the next ministerial meeting of the Zone. I wish the Government of Cabo Verde all the best for its presidency and encourage States members of the Zone to actively participate in the upcoming ministerial meeting. I also wish to extend sincere thanks to the Government of Uruguay for the excellent work it has done so far during its presidency of the zone.

Mr. Mazzeo (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina is proud to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/69/L.89, which has just been introduced by Uruguay, owing to our firm belief in the importance of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, which was established in 1986 at the initiative of Brazil, with the support of my country. My country's active participation in the Zone of Peace and Cooperation reflects its commitment to the universal values of international peace and security and to the sustainable development of the southern hemisphere.

We pay tribute to the leadership and the outstanding work done by the Government of Uruguay as President pro tempore of the Zone since 2013 and in particular convey our gratitude to the Government of Cabo Verde for offering to host the next ministerial meeting of the zone at a date to be decided later.

The Montevideo Declaration, adopted in 2013 at the seventh ministerial meeting of the Zone, reflected the convergence of views of the members of the zone regarding certain issues that are extremely sensitive, such as the need to continue to work to put a swift and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. On that occasion, the members of the Zone expressed their concern at the continuing situations that negatively affect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of certain States members of the Zone. We support their endeavours in promoting the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes and the quest for negotiated solutions to the territorial conflicts affecting them.

The particular importance of the status of this Zone lies in the fact that it is not just an area of peace and cooperation but also a zone free of nuclear weapons, the result of an effort that flowed from the very ideal of peace and security that led to the birth of the United Nations itself, as well as the various regional and subregional organizations to which the various States of the zone belong. Here Argentina believes that although some countries are not members of the Zone, they are adopting a responsible attitude that is respectful of the goals of peace and security and of the commitments undertaken with respect to the ban on weapons of mass destruction that the zone imposed upon itself.

The Montevideo Plan of Action set out specific cooperation measures, in recognition of the many potential sectors for South-South cooperation. Thus the establishment of a Working Group on peacekeeping operations, pursuant to the Montevideo Plan of Action in 2013, is of great importance in that it provides an opportunity for deepening cooperation among the States members of the zone. Argentina therefore proposes to organize and host the first meeting of the Group, taking that opportunity to extend discussions to the full scope of issues related to cooperation in the area of defence.

Aware of its responsibilities in the area of search and rescue in the South Atlantic, Argentina has begun

the process of joining the Medium-altitude Earth Orbit Search and Rescue programme of the Cospas-Sarsat satellite system through the establishment of two new earth stations on Argentine territory, which will significantly improve distress-alert reception times in the South Atlantic.

We are committed to protecting and preserving the marine environment and living marine resources, and marine science. The Republic of Argentina launched the Pampa Azul initiative in order to contribute to broadening scientific knowledge as the basis for conservation policies and the management of natural resources, and encouraging technological innovations applicable to the sustainable exploitation of natural resources.

In conclusion, we are grateful for the support that this regional initiative will receive, which reflects the active commitment of both coasts of the South Atlantic to social and economic development, strict respect for human rights, international law and international peace and security.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.89, entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/69/L.89: Brazil and Sweden.

The President: May take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.89?

Draft resolution A/69/L.89 was adopted (resolution 69/322).

The President: May I take it that is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 34?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: I shall now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/69/L.88, circulated under agenda item 68, entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights".

The President: Members will recall that at its 77th plenary meeting, on 29 December 2014, the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 68. In order for the Assembly to consider agenda item 68, it will be necessary to reopen its consideration. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 68?

It was so decided.

The President: Members will also recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2014, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 68 to the Third Committee. In order to enable us to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 68 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 68 (*continued*)

Promotion and protection of human rights

Draft resolution (A/69/L.88)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia, who will introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia): It is with pride, honour and a sense of duty that Armenia presents draft resolution A/69/L.88, entitled "International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime", on behalf of its 84 sponsors, to which Armenia is deeply grateful. It is the result of intensive consultations among the membership that have been concluded successfully in order to secure full consensus on the text. We appreciate the broad membership's engagement in the negotiations and the constructive spirit that has been displayed throughout the process. Today's draft resolution follows another initiated earlier by Armenia and adopted by the Human Rights

Council in March. In paragraph 22 of its resolution, the Human Rights Council recommended that the General Assembly proclaim this International Day, and I am glad that we intend to heed its proposal.

Millions of human lives have been lost as a result of the most horrendous crime — genocide — that humankind has, to its shame, demonstrated the capacity to commit. In its pivotal paragraph 1, today's draft resolution proposes to designate 9 December as an international day of commemoration and dignity of the victims of genocide and as a day for a collective reflection on the millions of human faiths, hopes and aspirations that have been shattered by despicable brutality, violence and hatred.

On 9 December 1948, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Decades of deep analysis of the phenomenon of that crime and its root causes and consequences, carried out by a remarkable lawyer, Raphael Lemkin, resulted in empowering the international community with an important legal instrument for preventing and punishing genocide. The fact that in the decades since its adoption the international community has encountered repeated recurrences of genocide underscores how vital it is that we continue to take forceful collective action to prevent this scourge.

Ironically, as early as 1985, exactly 30 years ago, a United Nations human rights body, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in a landmark document known as the Whitaker report, initiated the idea of establishing an impartial international body concerned with preventing genocide. Shamefully, that and other recommendations of the report did not materialize at the time. The initiative fell on deaf ears, because apparently the immediate pressures of the day were a deterrent to an in-depth examination of the impending risks of the recurrence of genocide. Less than 10 years later, the international community witnessed its resurgence.

It took the international community a long time to reflect on what former Secretary-General Kofi Annan termed complicity with evil before tangible, albeit perhaps still modest mechanisms to prevent genocide were put in place. Together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, and the joint Office he shares with the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, takes centre stage in the area of preventing genocide within the vast human rights protection system. Their commendable efforts have alerted us to the critical priority of early warning and early action in denying potential perpetrators the opportunity to commit this ultimate crime. But the fact is that we must make a major contribution to changing the culture of our Organization from one of reaction to one of prevention. We believe this International Day will serve as an important platform for prevention by way of commemoration.

The memory of the victims of genocide should help us to transcend our collective sorrow, compassion and guilt and turn it into determination to act together in order to free the world once and for all from this dehumanizing crime. The United Nations, through its members and throughout its entire system, must demonstrate its ability to lead us towards that objective. Besides tools and structures, what it needs most is will. "Never again" should have to be uttered only once. To quote the Whitaker report, "It has been rightly said that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it".

Mr. Mnisi (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

To the victims of our past inaction, the International Day will restore dignity. The denial of the sanctity of life to millions is the ultimate injustice. That denial of justice haunts generations of survivors, and we speak from experience. It shatters faith in accountability. It undermines the fight against impunity, which is as essential as genuine reconciliation. As ever, we are all collectively responsible for putting together the building blocks of a clear system designed to deny the capability for committing the crime of genocide to its potential perpetrators. It is the most appropriate way to pay tribute to the memories of its victims.

We call on all Member States to adopt this draft resolution by consensus.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.88, entitled "International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/69/L.88, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Austria, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Lebanon, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Vanuatu.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.88?

Draft resolution A/69/L.88 was adopted (resolution 69/323).

The Acting President: Before I give the floor to speakers in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Sana (Rwanda): Rwanda, as a country that experienced one of the worst genocides — namely, the genocide against the Tutsi, during which Hutu and other victims were also killed — attaches great importance to honouring the victims in dignity. Resolution 69/323, which was just adopted, has the merit of reminding the international community of its obligation to do so.

However, we believe that, in addition to an international day, commemoration has to be undertaken case by case, with the international community providing a specific date for each country that has experienced genocide. That is why Rwanda has decided to dissociate itself from the resolution. Our position does not mean that we are against setting an international date, but is intended to stress that victims should be given names, that each genocide should be called by its name, and that dates of commemoration should be set taking into account a specific day for each country.

Mr. Mukerji (India): I wish to express my appreciation and felicitations to the delegation of Armenia for taking this important initiative. I also thank the President of the General Assembly, the Secretariat and all delegations for their widespread support for the consensus that led to the adoption of resolution 69/323 today.

For my delegation, this resolution is a logical culmination of a process that began when India, Cuba and Panama co-sponsored, in response to the advocacy of Raphael Lemkin, one of the first resolutions of the General Assembly — resolution 96 (I), of 11 December 1946, which mandated the drafting of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. India is a party to the Convention on Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both of 1948. We strongly endorse the principles of the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide. In view of the rights bestowed by the Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we believe that the legal obligations to refrain from genocide are recognized as erga omnes. India has therefore extended its full support and co-sponsored today's resolution.

It is worth recalling that the catalyst for the General Assembly resolution calling for the Convention on Genocide was the horrendous genocide that occurred in Europe during the Second World War. "Never again" has been a yardstick for the international community since the United Nations was founded 70 years ago. However, on the ground, it is regrettable that crimes of genocide have not been prevented, especially on the continents of Asia and Africa, during the past seven decades.

This year, we mark the tenth anniversary of the World Summit of 2005, when the establishment of an empowered 47-member United Nations Human Rights Council was agreed to by all of us. We are glad that 170 Member States voted in favour of resolution 60/251, creating the Human Rights Council, which is a democratically elected and transparent body representing all the regions of our Organization. On this occasion, we call for making the Human Rights Council more responsive, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, in providing early warning of situations where populations face the threat of genocide, so that the international community can act in time to ensure "never again".

The International Day that we have established through this resolution will give us the opportunity to commemorate the victims of genocide, and also express

solidarity with the survivors of genocide. By recalling our moral and legal rejection of the crime of genocide, we will be able to strengthen our collective resolve to ensure that this pernicious act remains outside the pale of civilized human behaviour. Today, through the adoption of resolution 69/323 by consensus, India joins all the other States Members of the United Nations in reaffirming our belief in the Charter of the United Nations, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan): I, too, wish to congratulate the delegation of Armenia for a job well done.

The Sudan welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/323, entitled "International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime". The Government of the Republic of the Sudan will observe the Day specified in the resolution for commemoration, which will definitely be an opportune and solemn occasion to recall acts of genocide committed in Europe during the Second World War and other parts of the world. Particularly, and as it primarily concerns the events in our continent of Africa, the Rwandan genocide of 1994 will be memorialized and the report of the Organization of African Union (OAU) International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and Surrounding Events, submitted to the OAU Summit in Togo in July 2000, will be circulated, studied and reviewed in my country.

Regrettably, at the turn of this century and the dawn of the third millennium, a disturbing trend to use the universally agreed principle of the prevention of genocide for political ends can be discerned. This is the most serious threat that the international determination to fight genocide could face after the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948. It could be, by all accounts, the greatest disservice to the fight against and prevention of genocide ever since.

To vindicate this argument, I would cite the allegations and accusations against our Government and our nation of committing genocide in the western region of the country, Darfur, since 2003. In all objectivity, I will briefly confine myself to citing the testimony repeated worldwide, indicating that the events in Darfur before the conclusion of a peaceful settlement to the conflict in Abuja in 2006 and Doha in 2011 did not constitute genocide. I stress that I do so to caution against offending the dignity of the victims of genocide, especially in Europe during the Second World War, in Africa in 1994 and perhaps elsewhere.

First, in June 2004, the then-Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, said of the situation in Darfur, "I cannot call the killings a genocide".

Second, the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur answered, "The Government of the Sudan has not pursued a policy of genocide directly or through the militias under its control".

Third, in July 2004, the African Union Peace and Security Council stated, "Even though the crisis in Darfur is grave, the situation cannot be defined as genocide".

Fourth, in December 2004, the then Organization of African Unity Chairman, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, stated, "Now, what I know of the Sudan does not fit in all respects to that definition of genocide". Previously, on 23 September 2004, at a press conference at United Nations Headquarters, in New York, President Obasango stated, "That does not amount to genocide from our reckoning. It amounts, of course, to conflict. It amounts to violence".

Fifth, in August 2004, the European Union fact-finding mission in Darfur concluded that, "although there was widespread violence in Darfur, there was no evidence of genocide". A spokesman for the mission stated, "We are not in the situation of genocide there".

Sixth, in May 2004 the Arab League commission of inquiry to Darfur took the position that events in Darfur were neither genocide nor ethnic cleansing.

Seventh, regarding individuals and non-governmental organizations, during a visit to Darfur in 2007 former United States President Jimmy Carter said, "There is a legal definition of genocide and Darfur does not meet that standard". In 2004, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said regarding Darfur,

> "By screaming the crime of all crimes, mixing military with humanitarianism to justify intervention, words do have concrete implication and offensive political interests".

Médecins Sans Frontières cautions that to continue with its job would entail "distancing ourselves from propaganda and resisting this era of confusion". In 2004, then-MSF-France President Jean-Hervé Bradol

stated that claims of genocide in Darfur were "obvious political opportunism". It was that organization which asserted that incidents of genocide had taken place in Rwanda in 1994 and accordingly won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

I conclude with the words of Mr. David Hoile that the misuse of the term of genocide is very regrettable. He said:

> "Crying wolf on genocide in Darfur can only but denigrate the memory of the reality of the Holocaust in Europe during the Second World War [and] encourage Holocaust deniers".

That misuse is, hopefully, what the present resolution intends to suppress. Again, while we caution against twisting this shared objective of prevention by memorialization, we confirm our support for the present resolution that has just been adopted.

Mr. Jabrayilov (Azerbaijan): Our delegation is taking the floor to explain its position on resolution 69/323, entitled "International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime".

Remembrance and commemoration of the victims of genocide deeply resonate with the people of Azerbaijan. It reminds us of a dark stage of our recent history that took place in Khojaly. Since 1992, each February we commemorate the anniversary of the atrocious crimes committed against the civilian population of the town of Khojaly, situated in the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

On the night of 25 and 26 February 1992, the town of Khojaly was brutally seized. The attack and capture of the town involved the extermination of hundreds of Azerbaijanis, including women, children and the elderly. Thousands of civilians were maimed and taken hostage; many of them remain missing. The town was razed to the ground. The level of brutality in Khojaly was shocking. Atrocities included scalping, beheading, the bayoneting of pregnant women and the mutilation of bodies.

The facts confirmed that the international slaughter of civilians in Khojaly was directed at their mass extermination only because they were Azerbaijanis. The agony of our people continues every day, undimmed by the passage of time. The people of Azerbaijan have been waiting for justice for 23 years. The continuous commemoration is also an important step towards determining the truth. Denial of the established facts is an insult to the victims. Denial does not make those facts go away. It does not change the past, and it certainly does not erase the memory of the people of Azerbaijan.

We believe that by putting forward this resolution, its main sponsor will come to terms with its modern history and recognize its responsibility for Khojaly. Only by unearthing the truth and recognizing the responsibility to bring all perpetrators to justice will we be able to move towards recognition and make our collective promise of "never again" a reality.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I give the floor to the representative of Chile to make a statement.

Mr. Olguín Cigarroa (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall be brief. I wish to emphasize the significance of the initiative put forward by the delegation of Armenia, which Chile co-sponsored, to designate the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime, which we trust will contribute to our goal.

Genocide arises in split societies where there are perceptions and feelings of exclusion that fuel actions against particular groups and create conditions conducive to their commission. The strengthening of the rule of law, inclusive development and respect for diversity and human rights is an effective way of addressing the deep roots of many conflicts and preventing the commission of the crime of genocide. Prevention must be a central aspect of the responsibilities of the international community, particularly on the part of the Security Council, which must efficiently use the early-warning mechanisms available. In that regard, we welcome the Rights Up Front initiative of the Secretary-General and the work of the Office of the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, as well as the prevention role played by regional and subregional organizations, local and religious leaders, women, young people, civil society and the media. I wish to emphasize here the role being carried out by the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention.

The responsibility to protect civilians against massive and general abuses of human rights resides first and primarily with the State, but the international

community can help in those efforts and act when Member States — either voluntarily or for reasons of complete inability — do not meet those obligations, in conformity with the responsibility to protect defined in the 2005 World Summit outcome document (resolution 60/1). With that vision of support for capacity-building, Chile has organized regional and international seminars with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect in Chile — such as the fifth annual meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points on the need to protect, organized with Spain in July.

Faced with the crime of genocide, we must have international mechanisms and/or tribunals that can ensure accountability and prevent impunity. In that regard, we must stress the role of the International Criminal Court, which — let us remember — requires the full cooperation of States with the Court so that it may carry out its functions effectively.

Chile regrets the exercise of the right of veto by permanent members of the Security Council in matters pertaining to genocide, and we call on them once again to refrain from using veto in cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, and to support the proposal made by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, to which Chile belongs, with respect to a code of conduct for the restriction of the use of the right of veto in such situations. That would represent a concrete way of paying tribute to the victims of that crime, which is universally abhorred, and of achieving a world free of the threat and scourge of genocide.

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): Resolution 69/323, which was introduced by Armenia, is about dignity — something that was missing from the statement made by the representative of Azerbaijan. In his statements, I believe that he neeeds to recall the genocide committed against the Armenians in Baku, Sumgait and many other places in Azerbaijan. We will therefore disregard the allegation made by the representative of Azerbaijan and call on him to demonstrate dignity and refrain from the trivialization of genocide.

Mr. Jabrayilov (Azerbaijan): I apologize for taking the floor a second time and would like to note the following.

Apart from considerable information emanating from the law-enforcement agencies of Azerbaijan, the responsibility of Armenia, including that of its political and military leadership and subordinate local armed groups, for the crimes committed in Khojaly has been reported, recognized and documented by numerous mass media organizations, human rights organizations, independent sources and eyewitnesses of the tragedy. Above all, the Republic of Armenia's responsibility for the crimes in Khojaly has been admitted by Armenia itself — by its high-ranking officials and the country's public sources. The following quotation from an interview with the President of Armenia, Mr. Sarkisian, with British journalist Thomas de Waal leaves no doubt as to the identity of the perpetrator of the crimes of Khojaly:

> "Before Khojaly, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us; they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that stereotype."

In conclusion, it is extremely disappointing that, while initiating resolution 69/323 and speaking about the responsibility for and importance of remembrance, Armenia continues to deny its responsibility for Khojaly.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 68.

Agenda item 122

Multilingualism

Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/282)

Draft resolution (A/69/L.86)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.86.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I have the pleasure, on behalf of the sponsoring States, to introduce

draft resolution A/69/L.86, on multilingualism, submitted under agenda item 122.

Access to information has always been a fundamental pillar of the United Nations. As we prepare to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of our Organization, that pillar is even more important in a context that is marked more than ever by the development of information and communication technologies. In that context, it is more necessary than ever before for the United Nations to take linguistic diversity into account so as to ensure that its message is heard by all the peoples of the world.

Accordingly, the draft resolution recalls the high priority of multilingualism in building a world that conforms to the ideals on which the Organization was founded — a world that strives tirelessly for peace, justice and freedom. That goal should be a catalyst for us to promote and strengthen parity among the six official languages while highlighting the importance of non-official languages.

From that perspective, the text underscores the responsibilities of the various departments and services of the Secretariat in the promotion and implementation of multilingualism. It also welcomes the appointment of a Coordinator for Multilingualism by the Secretary-General. It calls on the services and departments of the Secretariat to fully support the work of the Coordinator and on the Secretary-General to submit a report on that work.

To that end, the draft resolution notes the fundamental role that the Department of Public Information plays and underscores the importance of ensuring that all United Nations documents be published and accessible in the six official languages, including through the Organization's websites. In that regard, the draft resolution notes with concern the disparity among the official languages as well as among the non-official languages, as brought to light by the Secretariat's technical review. In that regard, the text urges the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to correct those disparities.

Another challenge that is no less important or deserving of our attention is the conservation of the audio-visual archives that record the 70-year history of the United Nations. We welcome the completion of their inventory. The draft resolution underscores the importance of their being digitized in order to avoid their deterioration.

The draft resolution's text also recalls the provisions concerning mobility that were introduced a year ago to take language skills into account.

Multilingualism is also important to the quest for world peace, and the draft resolution notes the submission to the Secretary-General of the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95), which was established for that purpose, as well as the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (A/69/968).

All of the aforementioned demonstrates the importance of multilingualism to achieving the objectives of the United Nations and how essential it is that we promote its implementation. It is a matter of equal dignity for all cultures and the effectiveness of the sacrosanct principle of the legal equality of all States and to the democratization of global governance. I can assure the Assembly that today's draft resolution will be adopted by consensus and sponsored by a significant number of countries, as has been the case in previous years.

Mr. Carrera Castro (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Spanish in the United Nations, in our first address to the plenary of the General Assembly since the Group was established on 16 September 2013.

Our group recognizes the growing interest of the Spanish-speaking peoples in the work of the United Nations. That has had an impact on the activities of the Organization through its increased and sustained consultations and discussions among Spanish speakers all over the world. That is what has led us to recognize that language groups can have a direct effect on the activities of the United Nations. One of our main goals, therefore, has been to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Group of Friends, bringing together the countries that share the Spanish language, so that we can promote the ideals, principles and purposes of the United Nations as well as their peoples' general welfare.

Our Group has also been particularly interested in strengthening its ties to other language groups within the United Nations, because we believe in diversity's richness and because multilingualism is the principle that unites us all. That is why we support efforts to fully implement the principle of multilingualism in the United Nations, and we consider it encouraging that the General

Assembly is reaffirming its importance with today's draft resolution (A/69/L.86). Once again, we reiterate our full commitment to achieving multilingualism at the United Nations, through the essential parity of use of the six official languages, equally and without discrimination. The Group of Friends of Spanish firmly believes that it will help to promote the mission of the United Nations and strengthen international support for its activities with the greatest possible transparency.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/69/L.86.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/69/L.86, entitled "Multilingualism", I wish to put on record the following statements of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

In paragraph 41 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would reiterate the need to fully implement and observe rule 55 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that during the sessions of the General Assembly the *Journal of the United Nations* shall be published in languages of the Assembly from within existing resources. The current interpretation and practice with respect to rule 55 is that the *Journal* is published in the six languages of the Assembly during the main parts of the General Assembly, from September to December, while during the remainder of the year the *Journal* is issued in English and French only.

Accordingly, if the General Assembly decides to continue with the current practice reflected in paragraph 41, adoption of the draft resolution would not require additional resources under the programme budget.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.86, entitled "Multilingualism".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/69/L.86, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Iraq, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mali, Monaco, Morocco, Niger, Peru, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.86?

Draft resolution A/69/L.86 was adopted (resolution 69/324).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the francophone ambassadors, I would like to express the Group's satisfaction at the orderly negotiating process facilitated by the delegation of Senegal, which allowed consensus to be reached on resolution 69/324. The Group of Francophone Ambassadors is pleased to see the unanimous adoption of resolution 69/324. In this regard, I should like to thank the Senegalese delegation for having facilitated negotiations on the text and all of the delegations that participated in the negotiations, which made constructive contributions to enhancing the draft and strengthening its provisions, thereby consolidating multilingualism within the United Nations.

The resolution is an additional means for us to consolidate multilingualism by giving it pride of place among the efforts of the United Nations aimed at preserving cultural diversity through the promotion of the use of languages on an equal footing in the work of the Organization. The preservation of multilingualism within our organizations serves, among other purposes, to facilitate international communication and to ensure the broad and inclusive participation of States and stakeholders in multilateral actions.

The resolution that we have adopted today reinforces language that recognizes the key role

that multilingualism plays in realizing the three pillars of the United Nations, namely, peacekeeping, development and human rights. In this respect, we hope that the implementation of the resolution will lead to the enshrinement of the principle of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations and strengthen multilingualism in the texts dealt with and issued by the United Nations and in key documents published on the website and the various United Nations publications.

Finally, my delegation reiterates that the francophone Ambassadors are ready to cooperate with the United Nations and its bodies to implement the resolution and will continue to work to promote the principle of cultural and linguistic diversity.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 122?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Draft resolution (A/69/L.91)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take action on the draft resolution entitled "Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2015 and beyond", issued as document A/69/L.91.

Members will recall that the General Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 62 and its sub-items (a) and (b), and agenda item 12, at its 26th and 27th plenary meetings, on 17 October 2014.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.91.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I am pleased, in our capacity as Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) Steering Committee, to introduce, on behalf of the African Group, draft resolution A/69/L.91, entitled "Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2015 and beyond".

Over the past 15 years the world has seen tremendous progress on malaria control and prevention. Indeed, the number of children who die from malaria has fallen by more than 50 per cent, and the United Nations estimates that 6.2 million lives have been saved as a result of malaria interventions between 2000 and 2015. Fifty-five of the world's 99 countries affected are on track to cut malaria incidence by at least 75 per cent by the end of 2015. Nowhere has the progress been more remarkable than on the African continent. The World Health Organization reports that nine countries are on track to reduce malaria incidence by 75 per cent, and three additional countries are projected to achieve reductions of between 50 and 75 per cent by the end of 2015. The result is that 3.9 million child deaths have been averted in Africa.

African countries and their partners have mobilized hundreds of millions of dollars to scale up malaria-control interventions, including long-lasting insecticidal nets, indoor residual spraying, rapid diagnostic tests and artemisin-based combination therapies. Despite the success of this unprecedented scaling up of anti-malaria interventions, much work remains to be done, and many countries in Africa continue to experience sub-optimal progress towards national and international targets.

As we turn to the Sustainable Development Goals in aggressive pursuit of malaria elimination, we must address weak health-care systems and inequitable access to health services, ramp up domestic and international financing, and deal with insecticide resistance. Tools such as the Alma 2030 Scorecard towards malaria elimination, launched earlier this year, are essential in tracking progress towards malaria elimination.

The aforementioned draft resolution, adopted on an annual basis, is critical because it provides a rallying message and guideposts to keep partners such as the African Development Bank, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank, the Department for International Development, the President's Malaria Initiative and others to ensure that we build sustainable funding plans and ensure quality financial management, including priority-setting and accountability for results.

This year's draft resolution is consistent with the purposes and missions of resolution 68/308, adopted last year, while highlighting substantial and technical updates and new developments in the area. The new components are as follows.

First, the draft resolution recognizes the beginning of the Sustainable Development Goal era in the movement towards malaria elimination, further recognizing, in this connection, the need for additional funding for malaria interventions and for research into and development of preventive diagnostic and control tools from the international community.

Second, it welcomes the World Health Organization's global technical strategy for malaria, adopted by the World Health Assembly in May, and the Action and Investment to Defeat Malaria 2016-2030 plan of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, launched at the third International Conference on Financing for Development, which together provide the framework to achieve a reduction in global malaria incidence and mortality rates by at least 90 per cent by 2030, which is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Third, it reaffirms the declaration of Alma-Ata, which was adopted at the International Conference on Primary Health Care, held in Alma-Ata from 6 to 12 September 1978.

Fourth, it acknowledges the progress made in Latin America in reducing the incidence of malaria, the progress made in parts of Africa in reversing the high burden of malaria and the success achieved in meeting the 2015 goals on malaria control set by the World Health Assembly, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, the Abuja Declaration on Roll Back Malaria in Africa and target 6.C of Millennium Development Goal 6.

Fifth, it expresses great regret at the high number of people still without access to medicines and underscores that improving access to medicine could save millions of lives every year.

Sixth, it stresses the importance of improving community-based systems in the control of malaria, bearing in mind that families are often the starting point for effective health care for a child with fever.

Seventh, it calls upon Member States to promote access to medicines and emphasizes that access to affordable and quality medicines and medical care in the event of sickness, as well as the prevention, treatment and control of disease, are central for the realization of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Eighth, it recognizes the importance of innovation in addressing the challenges of eliminating malaria, including the role of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in particular WIPO's research platform.

Lastly, it encourages the sharing across regions of knowledge and experience and lessons learned with regard to the control and elimination of malaria, particularly among the African, Asian and Latin American regions.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the facilitators of the draft resolution for their hard work and leadership in bringing it into its final form. I would also like to thank all Member States that were involved in the negotiation process for their active participation and support. I look forward to the adoption of this draft solution by consensus, as in previous years.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.91, entitled "Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2015 and beyond".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/69/L.91, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, India, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.91?

Draft resolution A/69/L.91 was adopted (resolution 69/325).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Forés Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The text just adopted is of the greatest importance for

the international community, especially for the peoples of Africa. On that continent, around 584,000 lives have been lost this year alone due to malaria. Most of these deaths occur among the continent's children, where every minute a child dies because of the disease even though it is preventable and curable.

Cuba joined the consensus on resolution 69/325, taking into account those factors as well as others of great interest set out in the resolution, out of the necessity of cooperating to confront malaria and support the countries facing it, which as developing countries do not have sufficient human, financial and medical resources to eradicate this disease, let alone the difficulty of gaining access to the international drug market for drugs or simply the gaps in health technology and infrastructure.

However, we would like to say, with respect to paragraph 40 of the resolution, which refers to initiatives on aid effectiveness — the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation — that those are not universally accepted agreements under the auspices of the United Nations. We believe that this is an attempt by developed countries to impose their vision on how to provide official development assistance to the countries of the South, thus obviating their historic responsibility to the developing world.

We reject attempts to legitimize or impose agreements reached by only a few countries. However, Cuba has always reiterated its willingness to rely on the principles and commitments set out in the aforementioned documents through an open and transparent process at the Organization and on an equal footing with all States Members of the United Nations.

For these reasons, Cuba declares that the part of paragraph 40 previously referred to is not consensus language, and we dissociate ourselves from it. We request that this statement be included in record of this meeting.

Ms. Argüello González (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/325. The issue of health is of paramount importance to our delegation as well as for our African brothers, especially with respect to a disease that can be prevented and cured and in whose complete eradication we can all play an important role. As stated previously, Nicaragua decided to join the consensus on the resolution.

However, we would like to be clear and on the record that our delegation did not support paragraph 40, with explicit regard to references to the documents on aid effectiveness, namely, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, since this language is not that of consensus. For that reason, we cannot accept it. We therefore dissociate ourselves from it and ask that our statement be included in the record of this meeting.

Ms. González (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela welcomes the adoption of resolution 69/325, entitled "Consolidating gains and accelerating efforts to control and eliminate malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, by 2015 and beyond".

In countries where malaria is endemic, there has been a significant increase in efforts to prevent it and adequately respond to it, which has led to a decline in the number of malaria-caused deaths from 2000 to 2015 of approximately 47 per cent at the global level and 54 per cent in the African region. Venezuela, aware that preventive efforts must continue and that the gains made to date must be consolidated, joined the consensus on the adoption of the resolution.

However, we wish to make a statement on operative paragraph 40, particularly concerning the reference made to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Venezuela wishes to state here once again its position of principle regarding the aforementioned documents and express its disagreement with the fact that they were included in the resolution.

These documents were adopted in forums external to the United Nations system, with the goal of avoiding the obligatory aspect with regard to the goals and financing outlined in the area of cooperation. The inclusion of and reference to these in the resolution and in other documents adopted by the United Nations represent an attempt to impose illegitimate agreements that have not been agreed by consensus by the States Members of the United Nations.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela therefore dissociates itself from the references to the Paris

Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in the resolution that we have adopted today. We ask that this statement be included in the record of the meeting.

Mr. Cadena (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We all aspire to see malaria eradicated throughout the world. The Government of the Republic of Ecuador therefore has designed and implemented policies and programmes that have cut by more than 99 per cent the number of cases of malaria among our people over the past 10 years.

Having read the report prepared by the World Health Organization on malaria in 2014, Ecuador acknowledges the major progress achieved in reducing the global mortality rate from malaria by 47 per cent between 2000 and 2013. This contrasts with the deaths of more than 584,000 people in 2013, 90 per cent of them from the African continent, including 410,000 African boys and girls.

Ecuador joined the consensus on this resolution in recognition the importance of control activities and their positive impact on reducing mortality and morbidity, particularly infant and maternal, in our region and throughout the world; the need to fight even more vigorously against malaria in countries with a high incidence of the disease; and to recognize how tenuous are the advances made in in combating malaria, as they depend on appropriate and timely investment and resources in order to sustainably carry out programmes.

Ecuador, which is at present in the pre-elimination stage, deems it vital to continue and make progress in activities aimed at the control and eradication of the disease. On average, over the past three years more than 84 per cent of funding for malaria-control programmes was provided by the Government. We believe that greater funding participation from other sources would contribute to the sustainability of effective action to eradicate malaria in our country.

However, Ecuador believes that it is appropriate to express its view that the reference to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in paragraph 40 of the resolution is inappropriate, as these are not documents agreed within the framework of the United Nations, unlike the reference to the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. Therefore Ecuador deems that the reference to these three documents, agreed beyond the fold of the United Nations, does not constitutes consensus language, and we dissociate ourselves from its inclusion in this paragraph.

Ecuador asks that this statement be included in full in the record of this meeting.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/69/L.77, entitled "Venue of annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/ United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services".

Members will recall that at its 75th plenary meeting, on 19 December 2014, the General Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda 24. In order for the Assembly to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 24, it will be necessary to reopen its consideration.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 24?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 24 (*continued*)

Operational activities for development

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/69/L.77)

The President: Members will also recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2014, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (a) of agenda item 24 to the Second Committee.

To enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 24 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/69/L.77, entitled "Venue of annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services".

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.77 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): On behalf of the members of the Group of 77 and China, I am honoured to introduce the Group's draft resolution, entitled "Venue of annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services" (A/69/L.77). The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its long-standing position that the Executive Board's annual sessions should take place only in New York, rather than alternating between New York and Geneva, so as to broaden developing countries' participation in the decision-making process of its deliberations. The Group has therefore prepared a draft resolution aimed at resolving the issue, which is currently under the General Assembly's consideration.

The Group's principled position on finally resolving this matter is informed by the following considerations, among others. The first is that holding Executive Board sessions in New York will represent significant cost savings for the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme, which could then be utilized for programming activities of the United Nations development system. Secondly, it represents the recognition that in the past, the participation of developing countries in the Executive Board sessions of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services held in Geneva has been lower than in New York, which supports the Group of 77 and China's argument for the holding of such meetings at the latter venue, which is also that of the Headquarters of the United Nations.

We should therefore not lose this useful opportunity to reach finality on a long-overdue issue. If we are really serious about leaving no one behind, this is the only possible route to take. It would not be prudent at this stage to attempt to address the matter by coming up with any stopgap measures. We therefore need a positive decision by the General Assembly on this issue.

The Group would like to note with appreciation the role of the Government of the Swiss Confederation in facilitating the hosting of alternative annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services at the United Nations Office in Geneva. We believe we will continue to count on Switzerland's support in development cooperation matters. That will be critical as we move towards adoption of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and prepare for the upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review negotiations.

Let us all strive for a strong and revitalized United Nations development system. Taking a positive decision on the draft resolution under consideration today will be an important step in that regard.

The Group of 77 and China would like to bring the Assembly up to date on the original draft text. The updates and changes that have been made to it are the result of extensive rounds of consultations with our partners, and reflect our commitment to meeting on the middle ground that we all strive for.

The eighth preambular paragraph should read,

"Recognizing that the participation of developing countries in the sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services held in Geneva has been less than those held in New York".

The ninth preambular paragraph should read,

"Noting the larger presence of missions from developing countries in New York".

The tenth preambular paragraph should read,

"Recognizing that the primary focus of the United Nations development system continues to be developing countries".

The eleventh preambular paragraph should read,

"Recognizing also the financial burden that the current system of alternating Executive Board sessions between New York and Geneva places on both developing countries and the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services".

The twelfth preambular paragraph should read,

"Noting that holding Executive Board sessions in New York would present significant cost savings to the core resources of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services that could then by utilized for programming activities of the United Nations development system".

The thirteenth preambular paragraph should read,

"Noting with appreciation the role of the Government of the Swiss Confederation in facilitating the hosting of alternative annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services at the United Nations Office in Geneva".

Paragraph 1 should read,

"Decides that all annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services will henceforth be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York".

And lastly, paragraph 2 should read,

"Encourages the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services to further discuss and continue existing arrangements to facilitate the participation of least-developed countries and landlocked developing countries in the annual sessions to be held in New York".

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/69/L.77, as orally revised. Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, I should like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the European Union in order to explain our position on the draft resolution contained in document A/69/L.77, entitled "Venue of annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/ United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services", as orally revised.

The European Union is fully committed to making the United Nations system more effective and acknowledges the importance of the issue under discussion in the draft resolution. We realize that the question of the venue for the annual sessions of the Executive Board is part of a broader discussion that is currently under way within the framework of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the United Nations system's development activities for 2016. The European Union would like to see this broader discussion of governance issues approached in an integrated rather than an isolated manner. We still do not understand why a topic that is a part of the broader context of governance has been removed from that context at this stage.

The European Union also believes that the Executive Board itself should have been the one to take a decision on the issue, and we regret that it was not in a position to do so. In our view, it is also regrettable that the discussions on the draft resolution began only a week before the closing of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. At the last meeting of the Joint Executive Board, a solution to the problem under discussion was almost reached, but owing to time constraints, a decision could not be taken. In order to reach a consensus on today's draft resolution, and in a spirit of compromise, the European Union is ready to take part in negotiations on the issue. We would have preferred it, however, if the deliberations on the issue had taken into consideration what was discussed by the Executive Board in order to arrive at a temporary solution to the question of the venue for its 2016 session. We are sorry that that proved impossible.

For those reasons, the member States of the European Union are not in a position to support this draft resolution.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The discussion on the venue of the annual sessions of the

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services alternating between New York and Geneva is not new. In that regard, the secretariat of the Executive Board prepared a note in December 2014 on the advantages and disadvantages of alternating between New York and Geneva. As reflected in the Board's note, a request for additional information was made. The Executive Board was, however, not able to provide the information that had been requested. Nevertheless, during the annual session in June this year, a decision was negotiated, and consensus was almost reached, but in the end not achieved owing to time constraints.

During those discussions Switzerland participated in a constructive manner and demonstrated flexibility in supporting the apparent consensus. That is also why, in draft resolution A/69/L.77, which is before us today, we have asked for the incorporation of amendments based on that consensus, as proposed by the delegation of the United States of America. I remind everyone that this proposal for consensus would mean holding the annual session of the Council in 2016 in New York instead of Geneva, as an exception. We would then take an informed decision with regard to alternation as part of the broader discussions on governance that will take place during the dialogue in the Economic and Social Council on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system.

We would like to make three important comments on the process that has brought us here today.

First, we are in favour of respecting institutional procedures. The General Assembly should examine the question of alternating the venues on the basis of a proposal drawn up by a decision of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, and approved by a resolution of the Economic and Social Council. An approach to good governance implies that the organizations concerned be consulted and be able to provide their recommendations. In the current case, neither the Executive Board nor the Economic and Social Council have issued a decision on the matter.

Secondly, we believe that such a decision should be based on substantive information. To that end, we have asked for an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of alternating the venues, but the information provided by the Secretariat remains clearly insufficient for that purpose. In fact, the difference in cost between holding the meetings in New York and in Geneva was not demonstrated.

Finally, we are convinced that the considerations of governance should be dealt with jointly, and not in isolation. The issue of alternation falls under governance and the functioning of the Council. Several aspects of governance will be discussed during the Council's dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. We think that it is simply premature to take a decision at this stage, given that many questions remain open, and that is particularly so in the context of the future implementation of the new sustainable development agenda from now until 2030.

On that basis, Switzerland will vote against the draft resolution proposed by the Group of 77 and China. We regret that the texts proposed based on the draft consensus from June were not taken into account.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.77, entitled "Venue of annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services", as orally revised.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan,

Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/69/L.77, as orally revised, was adopted by 103 votes to 11, with 38 abstentions (resolution 69/326).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Erdman (United States of America): My delegation deeply regrets that resolution 69/326 came to a vote. It was not necessary. The United States of America voted against the resolution for reasons of principle, procedure and substance. Let me be very clear, the United States has no objection whatsoever to the legitimate concerns of our Group of 77 colleagues about the costs of holding the Executive Board annual session in Geneva every other year. In fact, we share those concerns. We support moving the annual session to New York in June 2016. And we support making that change permanent in the context of the quadrennial omprehensive policy feview. Let me repeat, we support moving the annual session to New York in June 2016, and we support making that change permanent in the context of the review. But it needs to be done in a way that supports the United Nations system and the role of its organs, its agencies, its executive boards and its long-established procedures. It is therefore doubly unfortunate that a reasonable compromise, which was supported by many delegations and would have achieved the desired outcome in a way that addressed procedural concerns, was rejected.

My delegation firmly believes, and has consistently stated, that the subject of the venue of the Executive Board meetings, like other critical topics affecting the United Nations development system, including its functions, its funding practices, governance structures, partnership approaches, organizational arrangements, capacity and impact, should be debated and decided permanently by Member States in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to take place in the fall of 2016. That way, all Member States will benefit from the ongoing substantive discussions on those interrelated issues in the dialogue of the Economic and Social Council on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. And every country's concerns can be heard and addressed in a balanced and strategic manner.

We are also concerned that resolution 69/326, adopted today, makes no reference whatsoever to the Executive Boards, or to the Economic and Social Council for that matter, and that the General Assembly did not wait to take the views of those bodies into account prior to adopting the resolution adopted today, thereby disregarding the oversight role of those two critical bodies. We also note that the final paragraph of the resolution appears to contradict the stated purpose of the resolution, namely, to direct any cost savings from travel to United Nations development programmes — a goal that my cost-conscious delegation supports.

My delegation has engaged constructively on this issue, both in the Executive Board and in deliberations on the resolution. We have consistently worked to identify a path towards consensus. In the light of the significant consensus we all worked so long and hard to reach in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which all of our leaders will endorse in just two weeks, we deeply regret the failure to reach consensus on this resolution. As we embark upon building a global partnership for development — which by its nature will require good faith, cooperation and win-win outcomes — we can do better than this.

Mr. Henderson (Australia): Australia has some sympathy with the issues raised in the substantive proposals to reconsider the venue of the annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). We believe that that discussion should take into account the range of related issues, and we are prepared to work with Member States to address those issues through the appropriate channels.

We are deeply concerned, however, that resolution 69/326 was not endorsed through the Executive Board decision-making processes and was introduced in the General Assembly without sufficient time to build consensus. Australia greatly values the consensus-based decision-making that has been the long-standing approach of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board. Presenting a resolution on Board matters that does not enjoy consensus undermines the vital governance roles played by the Executive Board and sets a dangerous precedent for how we resolve important decisions about the governance and operations of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS. We would not want to see such an approach taken again.

Mr. Vestrheim (Norway): Like previous speakers, we regret that there was no real willingness to reach consensus in the matter before us. While we have sympathy with the desire to reconsider the venue of the annual sessions of the Executive Board, we believe that the issue should have been considered as part of the Economic and Social Council dialogues and the upcoming auadrennial omprehensive policy feview discussions. We also believe that resolution 69/326 procedurally undermines the authority of the Executive Board, as it brings in issues for the General Assembly's consideration without previous decisions by the Executive Board. That is all the more worrisome inasmuch as the resolution has budgetary implications that are of concern for the Organization.

We underline the importance of ensuring a well-functioning Executive Board in order to enable Member States to trust the organizations with their contributions. We equally emphasize the importance of respecting the principle of consensus in the governance of the United Nations funds and programmes, which are entirely funded by voluntary contributions. We are all well aware of the critical level of core funding — for example, to the United Nations Development Programme. Only by aways seeking consensus will we be able to mobilize the necessary funding.

Mr. Minami (Japan): At the outset, we have much sympathy for the legitimate concerns raised by the Group of 77 and China. However, Japan deeply regrets that resolution 69/326 was put to a vote. We place great importance on the effective functioning of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Executive Board. We respect its established practices and its rules of procedure. During the informal negotiations on the venue of the annual sessions of the Executive Board held at the previous annual session in June, Japan served as the facilitator, with the hope of reaching consensus among Member States. We came very close to a consensus, but unfortunately, we did not come to one by the end of the June session. It is our view that the issue of the venue of the annual sessions should have been discussed and decided by the Board itself. It is also our view that the decision of the Board should have been recommended to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. It is therefore regrettable that such a non-consenusal resolution was submitted at this session of the General Assembly in spite of the efforts we had made to achieve consensus at the previous Board session in June.

Additionally, as was explained by many other delegations, the issue of the venue of the Executive Board session should have been discussed in a holistic manner, not in an isolated manner, in the context of the governance of the United Nations development system. We deeply regret that we were obliged to vote against the resolution in order to express our disappointment with the way it was pushed forward without adequately listening to and accommodating other views and opinions.

As the former facilitator in the Executive Board, we feel that this issue could have been discussed in other forums, such as the Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system. We also feel that we would have been able to come up with other innovative options.

Lastly, I would like to stress that the procedure used in this vote is not helpful to confidence-building among the Member States of the Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, although we are

committed to working with the Member States in the coming Executive Board meetings of those three organizations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

I shall now give the floor to speakers who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Naeem (Maldives): The Maldives would like to make a this general statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States following the adoption of resolution 69/326, entitled "Venue of annual sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services".

As co-sponsors, we fully subscribe to the resolution. Many of our members cannot afford to maintain Permanent Missions in Geneva, and we are therefore vastly underrepresented in all of the Geneva processes. Holding all meetings in New York would certainly enhance our access to, and participation in, those meetings, which are of crucial importance to the sustainable development of small island developing countries. Given the existing practices and within the relevant mandates of the Assembly, we urge that our limitations also be fully taken into account in the further consideration of existing arrangements, so as to facilitate our participation in Executive Board meetings, as outlined in paragraph 2 of the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Gupta (India): We would like to begin by first complimenting the facilitator of resolution 69/326, the delegation of South Africa, for having so ably spearheaded the process of consultations over the past month since 21 July, when the draft resolution was submitted. My delegation would like to take this opportunity put in perspective the process, the history, the facts and rationale of how the process evolved and reached this stage.

It was last year at the June session in Geneva that the issue was first raised by my delegation, as well as by the Group of 77, that there has been inadequate representation of developing countries when such sessions were held in Geneva. As a matter of fact, merely six countries from developing groups were able to go from New York to attend those sessions.

Upon the conclusion of the sessions in Geneva, the Group of 77 made a considered submission in July of last year to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme to bring this matter to the consideration of all Board members. However, no action or response followed for nearly a year. Even at the June Board meeting this year, when the matter was not included in the agenda our delegation tried to engage constructively so as to get a resolution of the matter. However, middle ground could not be found owing to issues based on differences in perspectives, which led to the current situation. Since then, the Group of 77 and China, including my delegation, held at least four rounds of informal consultations with our partners on the subject, including yesterday, wherein every attempt was made to incorporate the updates and suggestions so as to further strengthen the resolution and take views on board.

In terms of the concerns that have been raised, which pertain, first, to this being a governance issue, we have consistently said that the issue of holding meetings in a particular place was decided through a stand-alone General Assembly resolution in the first place, and not through the relevant resolution of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission. Therefore, that mandate of the General Assembly needs to be respected.

We have also said that we have already spent nearly one and a half years on this subject, and therefore we have allowed enough time to discuss all the pros and cons of the subject meaningfully and to consider all sides.

We also believed that this particular step would be a meaningful step for the entire United Nations development system in pursuit of cost savings and would be extremely beneficial for developing countries, as the savings could be used for programming activities in developing countries.

Our delegation and the Group of 77 reached out and held extensive consultations at all stages and tried to reach middle ground on the resolution. We were hoping for a consensus solution and made all possible efforts in that regard. A result was reached today, and we hope that it will help further to focus the activities of the United Nations Development Programme in prioritizing its programmes and projects towards developing countries where the need is most felt.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on the list.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 24 and of agenda item 24 as a whole?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.